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ALBANIAN REFUGEE CONGRESS HELD IN YUGOSLAV TOWN

The Yugoslav press and radio have hitherto maintained silence concerning a congress held in the Yugoslav border city of Prizren on 10 May 1951. Four hundred delegates representing the 4,000 Albanian refugees currently in Yugoslavia participated in the gathering. The chairman was the 25-year-old Redjev Betsa, president of the Albanian emigre organization in Serbia, formerly an officer instructor of engineers at the Albanian noncommissioned officers' school in Shkoder, who had fled to Yugoslavia in 1949. The Yugoslav representative present was the Montenegrin Dusan Mgosi, who played a decisive role in the Alpanian Communist partisan movement during the war. He was one of two emissaries sent by order of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia in 1941 to unite the Albanian Communists, then divided into various small groups. This activity laid the groundwork for Communist partisan warfare and the later coup d'etat. During most of the war he was political liaison man between the Yugoslav and Albanian partisans.

The political significance of the congress is also emphasized by the choice of Prizren, only 16 kilometers from the Albanian border, as a meeting place. This city has played an important role in the recent history of Albania. The "Lesgue of Prizzen," formed in 1878 to protest the cession of four Albanian cities to Montenegro as ordered by the Congress of Berlin, may be designated as the first movement in the struggle for national independence, which finally led to the formation of an independent Albanian state. In the 19th Century, -under Turkish control, the Prizren region was still regarded as an integral part of Albania. However, even between the world wars, when the city lay within the Yugoslav boundaries, it continued to be a center of Albanian political activity directed against the Tirana government.

Less than 10 percent of the delegates to the congress of 10 May 1951 appear to be former members of the Communist Firty. Obviously, however, control is firmly in Communist hands. One gains the impression that the management was organized on the pattern of the People's Front with which the Yugoslav Communists attained so great a success during the war. The congress expressed itself in favor of an "independent democratic Albania." A resolution was passed announcing

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a vigorous struggle against the foreign slave regime of Enver Hoxha, and demanding the liberation of Albania from the "second occupation," that is, from Soviet occupation. However, the congress expressed itself just as decisively against Albanian emigres in Italy and Greece, whom it declared to be collaborationists, and attacked their efforts to re-establish the old regime. In addition, Yugoslavia was given a vote of thanks for its acceptance and protection of Albanian refugees.

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